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THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #169, September 6 – September 26, 2011
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

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community calendar

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WED SEPT 7

10am–noon • Free

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: 9/11 — THE NEW YORK PERSPECTIVE 10 YEARS LATER. Reflecting on how New York City has changed since the collapse of the Twin Towers, this discussion will focus on lost freedoms and the aftermath of the tragedy for Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities.
14 Vesey St. • 212-966-5132, x204
nyneighbors911.org

THU SEPT 8

6–9pm • \$100 & up

EVENT: ROC-UNITED 10TH YEAR FUND-RAISING GALA. Seventy-three workers from Windows on the World, the restaurant on the 107th story of the World Trade Center, lost their lives on 9/11. Several survivors came together to start Restaurant Opportunities Center-New York (ROC-NY), and later, ROC-United. The fundraising gala will feature the stories of 107 workers who have inspired the movement.
Colors Restaurant, 417 Lafayette St
212-777-8443 • rocny.org

7-9pm • Free

VIGIL: OUR DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH: STANDING TOGETHER 10 YEARS LATER. Come commemorate the events of 9/11 with speakers, activists, the poetry of Tahani Salah and the music of The Raskol Kahn.
Corner of Church St and Park Pl
212-691-6421 • nyneighbors.org

FRI SEPT 9

9am–4pm • Free

PROTEST: WAR CRIMINALS WATCH. Join War Criminals Watch, CodePink, Witness Against Torture and others to protest war criminals Michael Chertoff and John Yoo as they participate in a day-long conference hosted by the New York Law School, The American Constitution Society and the Federalist Society.
185 W Broadway • warcriminalswatch.org

SAT SEPT 10

2–5pm • Free

FESTIVAL: ZEITGEIST MEDIA FESTIVAL. The Zeitgeist Media Festival is an annual event where socially conscious artists from around the world unite in a celebration of possibility and hope for a sustainable future for our species.
National Black Theater Institute of Action

Arts • 2031 Fifth Ave
zeitgeistmediafestival.org

SUN SEPT 11

11am–6:30pm • Free w/ registration
EVENT: INTERDEPENDENCE SYMPOSIUM. Featuring speakers like Cornel West, Laura Flanders and Howard Dean, the symposium looks back on the ten years since 9/11 and forward to a future of human interdependence.
The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center,
111 Amsterdam Ave
interdependencemovement.org

1pm • Free

RALLY: EMERGENCY MOBILIZATION AGAINST RACISM, WAR AND ANTI-MUSLIM BIGOTRY. First held last year to show that right-wing opposition to the Park51 Center did not represent the views of most city residents, participants in this year's rally will speak out against racism and war.
City Hall Park • iacenter.org

MON SEPT 12

9am • Free w/ registration
EVENT: INTERDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION. International celebrations will take place along with live discussions, web seminars and art exhibits featuring the work of activists from around the world.
3-Legged Dog Art and Technology Center
80 Greenwich St
interdependencemovement.org

THU SEPT 15

4:30–6:30pm • Free
RALLY AND MARCH: SUPPORT SOVEREIGNTY FOR PALESTINE, PALESTINIAN RIGHT OF RETURN AND EQUALITY FOR ALL IN HISTORIC PALESTINE. Gather at 4:30 p.m. in Times Square and march to Grand Central and the United Nations at 5:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Palestine U.N. Solidarity Coalition.
palestineun@gmail.com

FRI SEPT 16

7:30pm • \$20 sugg
CONCERT: DAVID ROVICS. The renowned progressive troubadour headlines this event in solidarity with the band Café Guacasco who accompany the popular resistance in Honduras. This performance is part of the No Fracking Way! U.S Tour.
Park Slope Methodist Church, Sixth Ave at 8th St, Bklyn • brooklynpeace.org

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125 Barclay St.

Bluestockings
172 Allen St.

Kate's Joint
58 Ave. B

Housing Works
126 Crosby St.

Hudson Park Library
66 Leroy St.

Blick Art Supplies
1-5 Bond St.

Whole Earth Bakery
130 St. Mark's Pl.

Mamoun's Falafel
Restaurant
22 St. Mark's Pl.

Brecht Forum
451 West St.

Shakespeare Books
716 Broadway at
Washington Pl.

Theater for the New City
155 First Ave.

14TH TO 96TH ST.
Epiphany Library
228 E. 23rd St.

Chelsea Square Restaurant
W. 23rd St. & 9th Ave.

Manhattan Neighborhood
Network
537 W. 59th St.

Muhlenberg Library
209 W. 23rd St.

St. Agnes Library
444 Amsterdam Ave. (btwn
W. 81st and 82nd Sts.)

ABOVE 96TH ST.
George Bruce Library
518 W. 125th St.

Book Culture
526 W. 112th St.

Morningside Heights
Library
2900 Broadway

Harlem Library
9 W. 124th St.

Hamilton Grange Library
503 W. 145th St.

Uptown Sister's Books
W. 156th St. & Amsterdam

Bloomingdale Library
150 W. 100th St.

BROOKLYN
Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Pkwy.

BAM
30 Lafayette Ave.

SEPTEMBER

UPCOMING EVENTS

MON SEPT 12 • 7:30pm

PANEL DISCUSSION: UP FROM GROUND ZERO: ASSESSING THE LEGACY OF 9/11.

Co-sponsored by the Center for Constitutional Rights, the panel, which features Sadia Abbas, Christian Parenti and Vince Warren-will, assesses the challenges facing the United States ten years after 9/11.

Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

SAT SEPT 17 • 7pm

FORUM: FROM 9/11 TO THE ARAB SPRING: THE DECLINE OF THE US EMPIRE?

Featuring professor and historian Vijay Prashad, the forum examines the changes and continuity facing activists as we approach the wane of America's hegemony.

Sliding scale: \$10/\$15/\$25

SUN SEPT 25 • 5pm

READING: DEAD BIRDS OR AVIAN BLUES.

Howard Pflanzner, introduced by Robert Roth, will read/perform with Kayhan Irani from his new book, celebrating the birds and animals commenting on the human condition.

Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

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register online:
brechtforum.org
212-242-4201

SAT SEPT 17

6am • Free

SLEEP-IN RALLY: #OCCUPYWALLSTREET. *Adbusters* magazine is calling on 20,000 protesters to flood into lower Manhattan, camp out on the street and protest the current economic-political system. Demands include an end to corporate personhood, raising taxes on the top 2 percent and abolishing capitalism.
Wall Street
occupywallstreet.org

THU SEPT 22

9pm–midnight • Sliding Scale \$2–\$20

EVENT: BUILD BRIDGES NOT WALLS. Klezmer Musicians Against the Wall and Remi Kenazi highlight this evening of live music, food, drink, art and poetry. Proceeds to benefit the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Adalah New York.
Colors, 417 Lafayette St
juancarlos@rocunited.org

SUN SEPT 25

Noon-6pm • Free

EVENT: ANNUAL NEW YORK CITY FRIENDS OF CLEARWATER FESTIVAL. Music and more accompanies this celebration of the life and accomplishments of anti-fracking activist John Kreyve, a visionary friend of the waterfronts who organized for a cleaner Hudson River.
Pier 66 Maritime at 26th St
212-978-7300 • nycfriendsofclearwater.org

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Purity Diner
43 Underhill Ave.

Bedford Library
496 Franklin Ave.

Parkside Deli
203 Parkside Ave.

BRONX
Brook Park
141st St. & Brook Ave.

Mott Haven Library
321 E. 140th St.

STATEN ISLAND
St. George Library Center
5 Central Ave.

Port Richmond Library
75 Bennett St.

Dot Com Cafe
36 Bay St.

Everything Goes Book Café
208 Bay St.

High Bridge Library
78 W. 168th St.

Mi Casa Bakery
18 E. Bedford Park Blvd.

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THE VERIZON STRIKE:

Worker Strength or Missed Opportunity?

BY ARI PAUL

When 45,000 Verizon workers walked out on Aug. 8, rejecting draconian work-rule and benefit concessions demanded by the telecom giant, union officials representing the strikers spoke of a historic showdown.

Greg Chenez, president of Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local 1117, said Verizon's "demands cover everything we've negotiated over the past 50 years and they want concessions on all of it." Chenez said the company was insisting on "concessions on wages, pensions, medical benefits, work rules, job security, double time, differentials, sick pay, disability payments, reducing vacations, tuition reimbursement and increasing retiree costs for benefits. Their list goes on and on and on."

Yet two weeks into the strike, even as Verizon appeared to be feeling the sting from growing service complaints, union bigwigs called it quits. Saying the job action successfully got Verizon's "attention," union insiders claimed the company agreed to drop some of the more than 100 different concessions it was seeking. But major issues remain on the table, such as making unionized workers pay for health-care plans for the first time, ending pension contributions for existing employees and switching new workers to volatile 401(k) pensions.

BACK TO THE TABLE

For its part, Verizon, which demanded \$1 billion in givebacks from unionized wireline technicians despite posting \$19.4 billion in profits in the last four years, was far from conciliatory. After the CWA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) announced it would re-engage in negotiations, company spokesman John Bonomo mocked the picket lines as "theatrics." Verizon Executive Vice President Marc Reed, whom labor reporter Steve Early describes as a "major architect" of the company's de-unionization strategy, also took a dig, claiming Verizon only wanted "to convince the unions to begin bargaining in good faith."

Nonetheless, some labor supporters see hope in the renewed talks. Joe Burns, a CWA lawyer (whose work is unrelated to Verizon) and author of *Reviving the Strike: How Working People Can Regain Power and Transform America*, said that in most situations when a strike ends without a deal, workers are forced to work without a collective bargaining agreement until one is reached. In this case, the company agreed to have the current pact extended.

"That demonstrates that the strike was having success. It represents the company having to back down," Burns told *The Independent*. "We haven't seen a strike like this for years. It's a very significant event. The question's going to be: how do you keep up

the pressure?"

Burns argues unions need to see the process as more like a chess game and less like a boxing match. He says a strike isn't about trying to land a knockout blow against the company, but rather it's a tool in a multi-pronged approach, especially when the company's war chest is much bigger than the union's. In this instance, *Labor Notes* reported that "on the eve of the strike, Verizon announced it would pay a special \$10 billion dividend to

workers and an army of part-time workers who averaged \$11 an hour. The Teamsters, under the leadership of Ron Carey, elected on a dissident reform slate, spent more than a year organizing members. Issues included limiting subcontracting, fixing hazardous working conditions, raising pay from the bottom up and, most importantly, creating more full-time positions for part-time workers.

campaign to deny Verizon iPhone customers could have taken a bite out of its profits. In April, Verizon reported that iPhone sales helped it triple its first-quarter profits to \$1.44 billion compared to 2010.

In reality, according to CWA insiders, strike planning was a maladroitness affair, brought on more by rank-and-file anger than strategic organizing. Also, strikers said the unions limited their demands to the prior contract. The unions failed as well to outline

a strategy for organizing the 135,000 non-unionized Verizon workers, overwhelmingly in the wireless division. Over the last decade, union density at Verizon and its subsidiaries has dropped from 70 percent to 30 percent. After a strike in 2000, CWA won contract language allowing it to sign up wireless workers without company interference, a stipulation Verizon systematically undermined. This time, CWA spokeswoman Candice Johnson said, "We've been hearing from thousands of wireless workers who are interested in joining the union. We have some capability of doing that."

But Daniel Gross, executive director of Brandworkers International and a former Industrial Workers of the World organizer, is skeptical of this possibility.

"It's a tremendous failure of the labor movement to leave retail, for example, as a largely uncharted territory," he said. "Where are the resources being deployed to get these folks organized,

instead of the tens of millions of dollars pumped into the Democratic Party?"

He also downplayed claims that CWA strikers caught the attention of wireless workers wanting to join a union. As Gross pointed out, having union members outside the store while the non-union worker is inside with the manager reinforces the image of the union as a third party. "Workers end up seeing the union as something they don't control," he said.

With the unions and Verizon back in negotiations, it's uncertain if the strike will result in a better contract. Even if the unions beat back the major concessions, it won't add to the current national discussion about class, wages and unions. Nor would it bring hope to non-union workers at Verizon or anywhere else for that matter.

Other corporations might conclude that they can simply wait for the workers to come back and say, "We want to talk." Gary Chaison, a professor of industrial relations at Clark University, asks, "Does that dull the effectiveness of the use of the strike weapon?"

When labor needs that tool the most, the answer is yes.

Ari Paul has reported for *The Nation*, *The American Prospect*, *Al Jazeera English* and *Free Speech Radio News*.



PICKET POLITICS: During the two week Verizon strike, Communication Workers of America members held daily protests outside Verizon's headquarters in downtown Manhattan, refusing the more than 100 different concessions demanded by the company.

shareholders." Meanwhile, the CWA went into battle with a \$400 million strike fund that would pay a maximum of \$300 a week to picketers.

"From the union side it was more strategic to go back to work," Burns said. "The point is you need to have tactical flexibility."

And he might be right for the veteran workers: The unions may walk away with a contract that doesn't have all the givebacks the company wanted.

THERE IS POWER IN A UNION

But the Verizon strike was also a rare opportunity when union workers could show their might. The strike ended just as service disruptions began to be reported. CWA District 1 Vice President Chris Shelton called the strike a "Wisconsin moment," referring to the rank-and-file mobilization and occupation of the statehouse in Madison last February against the Republican effort to strip public workers of collective bargaining rights.

Is it naive to think that a strike at a hostile and profitable company like Verizon could be a turning point for private sector labor after three decades of defeat? Not only can this be done, it has been done.

In August 1997, more than 185,000 Teamsters at UPS went on strike, crippling the giant of the courier industry. The company had been creating two classes of workers: full-time

HOW TO WIN A STRIKE

With the company not budging during the strike, the union pursued a sophisticated media and outreach strategy, organizing community supporters and other workers to join Teamsters on the picket lines coast to coast. In the end, the Teamsters notched a decisive victory with a contract that included 20,000 full-time job opportunities through new hires and promotions, as well as pay increases and caps on subcontracting. The fight also sparked a national conversation about a profitable corporation's responsibility to invest in decent-paying jobs.

Like the UPS strike, Verizon workers had the opportunity to shut down a well-known company that could not move offshore. Hiring scabs to maintain the complex copper line system would have been impractical. And with national anger raging about a federal debt-limit deal that puts more burdens on the poor and workers for the sake of the rich, a campaign against corporate greed could have easily gained sympathy, particularly when the five top executives at Verizon raked in \$258 million over the last four years.

The unions also had a choke point with the upcoming release of the iPhone 5. Had the strike gone on, picketers outside Verizon Wireless stores could have urged potential customers to patronize AT&T. Just as the Teamster strike cost UPS tens of millions of dollars a day, forcing it back to the table, a

ROCing the Restaurant Industry

By DANIA RAJENDRA

If you lived in New York City on 9/11, you might remember a few brief moments of connection, when total strangers acted like friends — sharing food, asking, “Are you okay?”

It’s that sort of spirit that animates the work of the Restaurant Opportunities Center-United (ROC-United), a national

and later a federal suit against high-profile restaurateur Daniel Boulud for discriminating against the Latino and South Asian staff. ROC won a settlement in 2007, including wage increases and government-monitored policy changes.

The second prong of featuring and fostering employers who do the right thing has led ROC to educate and organize restaurant owners as well as workers. As part of

organization.

The last prong is research and policy advocacy. ROC has lobbied for a New York City law to guarantee paid sick days to all workers (City Council Speaker Christine Quinn quashed it) and a similar measure in Philadelphia (Mayor Michael Nutter vetoed it), as well as the WAGES Act, a federal bill to increase the de facto minimum wage of tipped workers, stuck at \$2.13 an hour since 1991.



MAKING A POINT: Omaira Cintron of ROC New York makes a point during a recent membership meeting at Colors restaurant. ROC now has chapters in eight cities and is fighting for workers’ rights throughout the restaurant industry.

organization originally built by former Windows on the World workers who lost 73 coworkers that day. ROC-United Co-Director Saru Jayaraman calls it “a legacy in their name.” ROC-United Co-Director Fekkak Mamdouh, a former Windows on the World worker, said that since 9/11 he has remained focused “on doing something positive.”

He and Jayaraman, with thousands of restaurant workers, have built their local workers center into a nascent national movement to transform restaurant work and, they hope, the U.S. service sector and even the entire economy, similar to what the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) did in the 1930s, when millions of industrial workers struck, fought and negotiated low-wage factory jobs into living-wage ones.

They’re the first to admit that it’s a tall order. “We’ve come a long way,” Jayaraman said. “And there’s a long way to go.”

THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY

The organization, founded in 2002, now counts nearly 8,000 members and \$5 million in settlements from employers. The wins — and some losses — have honed ROC’s three-pronged organizing strategy: fight for workplace justice, feature and foster employers who do the right thing by their workers and promote policy.

It’s the first prong — the fight for workplace justice — that originally brought restaurant workers media attention. First, Windows on the World owner David Emil opened a new restaurant and offered jobs to a few Windows workers — but hired more when ROC threatened to picket the opening. Then, in 2005, workers filed discrimination claims

this work, ROC also provides training and education for restaurant workers in the skills they need in the kitchen or dining room and in the movement — classes include cooking, serving and bartending, and they all cover political education and leadership. In New

Employers are obligated by law to make up any difference between the \$2.13 base wage, the tips and the national minimum of \$7.25 — for example, on a slow shift — but ROC’s research and anecdotal evidence indicate that such obligations are rarely met. Six states,



MENTORING: Colors chef Julio Anzures (left) shares some food prep tips during a busy lunchtime at the restaurant.

York, and beginning in Detroit Sept. 12, ROC-run cooperative restaurants called Colors serve as a model and house the training programs. In New York, the training is run in collaboration with Kingsborough Community College. It’s through the classes and the campaigns against unfair employers that restaurant workers become leaders in the

including Washington, have eliminated the tip credit, meaning tipped workers are paid the same minimum wage as any other worker and other states have raised the minimum wage — or the tipped wage — higher than the federal minimum. But in 22 states, tipped workers are paid a minimum cash wage of under \$3 an hour.

EXCLUDED WORKERS GET ORGANIZED

Though the political landscape in the decade since 9/11 has been bleak, one bright spot has been the worker organizing now included under the new umbrella term “excluded worker.”

The Excluded Worker Congress (EWC), formed at the 2010 U.S. Social Forum, is a national network of workers who are excluded by law or practice from the protections of the National Labor Relations Act, the 1935 law that regulates workers’ right to bargain collectively with their employers.

Workers may find themselves in such a position due to a variety of circumstances — being undocumented, formerly incarcerated, or a recipient of workfare; by profession (including farm workers and taxi workers); by geographic location (22 of the United States are “right to work”); or by finding themselves left behind by the intensification of U.S. class stratification.

The organizations they’ve formed to represent themselves and improve their jobs have become the constituent members of the EWC. The roster is a who’s-who of innovative organizing institutions, many of which started in New York: the Restaurant Opportunities Center-United, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance and the Domestic Workers Alliance, as well as the National Day Laborers Organizing Network (NDLON), guest workers, plus some AFL-CIO and Change to Win union locals.

These groups formed the EWC to share information, strategy and “capacity” under a human rights framework, that is, the idea that rights on the job are human rights regardless of the protection, or lack thereof, under state and local laws.

Though the EWC’s initial goals seem modest and federal-policy focused — raising the minimum wage and passing federal legislation that would protect undocumented workers organizing to improve work conditions — the EWC is also working to support the campaigns of its constituent members, such as the National Domestic Workers Alliance’s recent success winning a convention recognizing the rights of domestic workers worldwide, including the right to bargain collectively, at the United Nation’s International Labour Organization in June.

Several EWC member groups have signed cooperation agreements with the AFL-CIO that will facilitate working together around issues of organizing, winning rights for excluded workers and building long-term relationships.

Such agreements indicate “a formal recognition of a shared agenda,” wrote labor expert Nik Theodore, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, in a report released last year on the partnership between NDLON and the AFL-CIO. And as such, he noted, “it is difficult to overestimate the significance.”

— DANIA RAJENDRA

For more information, see excludedworkerscongress.org.

Jayaraman notes that “waiters and waitresses experience three times the poverty rate of the rest of the U.S. workforce” and that of the five lowest-paying careers in the United States, food preparation and service account for three. ROC has documented widespread wrongs: rampant racial discrimination (on average, white workers earn \$3.71 per hour more than workers of color), wage theft and injuries on the job, as well as the industry standard of zero paid sick days, which of

away from strong support for immigrants’ rights.

“ROC-United is a deeply multiracial organization, reflecting the full range of people working in the industry,” wrote ROC Board member Rinku Sen, who, with Mamdouh, co-authored the book *The Accidental American* about ROC’s early years. ROC focuses on high-end dining where the wait staff is overwhelmingly white and the cooks and dishwashers overwhelmingly immigrants

divisions, employers will be able to divide and conquer,” notes ROC-Michigan executive director Minsu Longiaru.

“It’s the common struggle, common frustration, common goal that binds people together,” Woong Chang, a Washington, D.C. bartender and member of the ROC board of directors, added. That might be expected. What’s unexpected, he said, is the depth of the friendships they’re developing in the process.

Chang, who is 30 and tends bar at a hip Washington, D.C. hotel, majored in cognitive science at UC Berkeley. He has worked in the restaurant industry on the West Coast and the East Coast because, he said, it allows him to focus on his passions: food, travel and music. Chang says that in his eight years of experience, he’s seen what ROC documents in its research: “This industry has a severe level of segregation and discrimination.”

Chang explains that before joining ROC, he would feel powerless to act when he saw his friends’ or co-workers’ rights being violated in a restaurant. “I felt like a bad friend for not being able to do anything. ROC has become my vehicle.”

Though Chang has few complaints about his own job situation, he is eager to participate in improving the industry. To that end, he has shared his story as part of ROC’s research, chanted in protests and testified at a union-sponsored hearing, and now serves on ROC’s national board of directors as the front of the house representative.

Nikki Lewis, 29, was looking for a new job when she found the ad for ROC’s training classes on Craigslist. When she met Chang on the first day of class, their backgrounds had some overlap: Lewis holds a bachelor’s degree in English and has worked as a bartender, waitress and manager. But not everyone else in their class had such similar backgrounds.

For example, Mario Herriquez, who is 40, didn’t go to college. He immigrated to the Washington, D.C. area from El Salvador and began his career in the U.S. restaurant industry in 1988 as a dishwasher. “I worked from the bottom to the top, being a pizza man, grill cook, sauté cook, all that,” he said, before becoming the chef of an Italian restaurant in Maclean, VA. He said he has always had good relationships with the front of the house workers in his restaurant, so he wasn’t surprised to get along with the others in their class. But neither was he expecting them to become, as he said, “like a real family.”

“The class is 8 to 10 weeks, and every single week you’re talking about political things that are controversial — immigration, history and politics, gender relationships, race relations,” said Lewis, who has since joined the staff at ROC and continues to tend bar.

TASTE OF FREEDOM

Colors was founded in 2006 by ROC members who previously worked at Windows on the World, a high-end restaurant located in the World Trade Center that was destroyed on 9/11. Always an anomaly in the super-competitive Manhattan restaurant market with its emphasis on worker self-management and paying a living wage, Colors struggled to find its niche. It appears to have done so in the past year as the restaurant has shifted its emphasis to serving local social justice activists.

“That we can celebrate life and feed the movement is wonderful,” says Juan Carlos Ruiz, the national coordinator for Colors. “We want to be an organizing center not just for ROC but for the greater social justice movement in New York.”

Colors will host ROC’s 9/11 tenth anniversary gala commemoration on Sept. 8. It will also host a number of public forums this fall featuring groups that advocate immigrant and worker rights. A second Colors is slated to open in Detroit on Sept. 12.

Located just south of Astor Place at 417 Lafayette St., Colors offers an eclectic global cuisine with most of its ingredients locally sourced. According to Ruiz, its 20 workers earn an average wage of \$11 an hour plus tips, have basic healthcare coverage and receive three to six sick days per year.

— JOHN TARLETON

For more information, visit colors-newyork.com or call 212-777-8443.



TASTY: Colors waiter Lamount Morris serves lunch. Colors employees earn an average of \$11 an hour plus tips and have a voice in how the restaurant is managed.

course means people who should be home in bed (or at the doctor’s) come to work to prepare food — a situation Jayaraman sums up as “just disgusting.”

GOING NATIONAL

These are problems that extend beyond New York. In 2008, Jayaraman and Mamdouh formed Restaurant Opportunities Center-United to go beyond the five boroughs. There are now chapters in seven other locations in addition to New York: Miami; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; New Orleans; Chicago; and Michigan. Jayaraman says that the ROC-United headquarters in New York receives calls from people all over the country looking for help with problems on the job. This has spurred the organization to grow faster, planning even more chapters.

Expanding has “made us even more diverse and more inclusive as an organization,” Jayaraman said, noting that the demographics of New York’s workforce skew much more male and immigrant than do the rest of the country. “We definitely don’t think of ourselves as an immigrant organization any more,” she said, though they have not backed

of color. “In addition,” she writes “it also organizes black workers who are shut out of high-end restaurants altogether and largely relegated to fast food.”

Along with the coalitions they build inside of restaurants, ROC-United has established ties with the burgeoning food justice movement, a loose collection of farmers and other producers, consumers and concerned individuals who oppose the environmental and social destruction caused by corporate agriculture, pressing the movement to include worker conditions in the growing consciousness of “fair” or “good” food. ROC-United also participates in the Food Chain Workers Alliance, a coalition of worker organizations that works to bring justice to the people whose work makes possible the “farm to fork” trajectory, as well as the Excluded Worker Congress (see sidebar).

CREATING ‘FAMILY’

Of course, to get all this done, ROC needs to bring people together across the lines inside and outside of restaurants. “The restaurant industry itself is fraught with these divides. If we don’t bring people together across these

Instead of going their separate ways, the three classmates and the others in their class became good friends. They look out for each other — sharing leads on new jobs and new housing — and stay in regular contact. “I call them up after I get off work to see what they’re up to,” Chang says. Both Lewis and Herriquez used the word “family.”

“That’s the wonder of being a member of ROC,” Herriquez said. “It’s the opportunity to work to improve our industry, and, also, meeting people [and sharing] our stories and our difficulties, and our accomplishments. Everyone has accomplished something. We share our goals, like a real family.”

For more information, visit rocunited.org or call ROC-United at 212-777-8443 or ROC-NY at 212-343-1771.

BEYOND 9/11

September 11 and its aftermath sparked the formation of ROC as well as a number of other new organizations that could respond to everything from attacks on civil liberties and immigrant communities to preemptive war.

FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM

3 West 29th St.
(646) 290-5551 • familiesforfreedom.org
Founded in September 2002, Families for Freedom (FFF) emerged from the grassroots opposition to the detention of members of New York’s South Asian community. Since then FFF has been fighting for detainee rights through outreach, education campaigns and support groups. FFF assists around 600 to 700 individuals a year and is the only NYC group organizing on behalf of immigrants facing deportation because they have criminal records. “We do [this work] because we know that the immigration laws of 1996 went too far in criminalizing individuals,” says organizer Betsy Dewitt.

IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR (IVAW)

292 Madison Ave.
(212) 982-9699 • ivaw.org
Founded in 2004 at the convention of Veterans For Peace and directly inspired by the 1970s-era Vietnam Veterans Against the War, IVAW calls for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq and Afghanistan and for reparations to be paid to the people of those countries. The group is currently leading a campaign to stop the deployment of soldiers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder to Iraq or Afghanistan.

VOICES THAT MUST BE HEARD

219 W. 40th St.
(646) 758-7773 • indypressny.org
Originally founded as an online publication presenting voices from the Muslim community, more than 480 issues later *Voices That Must Be Heard* has become a tremendously diverse media outlet that highlights media coverage each week from ethnic and community newspapers across New York City — including *The Independent*. Communications Manager Jehangir Khattak says the organization “has proved to be an excellent platform for minority communities to spread their perspective and [promote] their good work.” *Voices That Must Be Heard* recently became part of the CUNY Journalism School and will begin publishing under a different name soon.

FAMILIES FOR A PEACEFUL TOMORROW

15 Rutherford Pl.
(212) 598-0970 • peacefultomorrow.org
Peaceful Tomorrows was founded by family members of victims of the 9/11 attacks who united to promote non-violence, just U.S. foreign policies and dialogue as an alternative to war. Members frequently share their stories as a way to educate the public about 9/11 and its aftermath.

— ZAYD SIFRI

The Empire of Chaos

BY ARUN GUPTA

The events made my mind reel. The angry plumes of smoke, office paper raining like confetti, tumbling plexiglass windows flashing in the sunlight. I could make out jumpers and watched a jet fighter whoosh by the burning towers, bank and disappear. I thought, “This is like a movie.”

It upset me that my only way to comprehend the events was to reference the Hollywood imaginarium. But it was understandable. Where else would I have seen images resembling the war in my backyard — collapsing skyscrapers, gigantic fireballs and thousands of dead?

The need to make sense of the events of Sept. 11 — the plot by al-Qaeda, four hijacked airliners, the demolished twin towers and nearly 3,000 dead — is universal. It is why the state’s first task after 9/11 — before one bomb dropped, one soldier deployed — was to imprint the “war on terror” on the collective American mindset.

Mere hours after the attack, in his address to the nation, Bush began assembling the ideological scaffolding for endless war: “America was targeted for attack because we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world”; “our nation saw evil”; “the American economy will be open for business”; “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them”; and “we stand together to win the war against terrorism.”

Many of the ideas that have shaped the events and policies of the first decade of the war on terror are right there: American exceptionalism, they hate us for our freedoms, capitalism will triumph, and this war will know no geographic or temporal bounds.

PAX AMERICANA

These ideas were bundled into the “New American Century,” the neoconservative dream to extend Pax Americana indefinitely. Ten years later that belief has faded as the United States is being battered by an economic depression that shows no end. The only question appears to be how quickly America will be eclipsed by China. So how did we get from the triumphalism of “mission accomplished” to the twilight of American Empire?

In essence, the responses to 9/11 by the managers of the corporate-military state, which were largely shaped by ideology, have accelerated a decline that started decades ago. After World War II, U.S. hegemony was based on its ability to order the world. Today, U.S. power is dominant but waning, and its main effect is that of disorder — internationally and domestically. And that disorder is eroding the military, economic, political and diplomatic foundations of its rule.

While there is no certainty that China will usher in a Pacific Century — in the 1980s it was “the Japan threat” that generated U.S. anxiety — American Empire will continue to decay if for no other reason than its economic base has been hollowed out and new power blocs are forming across the world.

After WWII, the United States wielded

all manner of institutions and ideology in establishing global rule: the Bretton Woods Agreement ordered the world economy, the dollar was the reserve currency, the United Nations legitimized undemocratic big-power rule, the Pentagon and threat of nuclear weapons served as the instruments of violence, the transnational corporation combined with U.S. government aid opened and created new capitalist markets, and anti-Communism undermined and isolated mass anti-capitalist forces in the West. Finally, the compact between capital and labor provided for social welfare, generous benefits and increasing wages so workers could enjoy the consumer bounty in return for purging the left from unions and helping squelch labor movements in the Third World.

FRAYED

By the 1970s that system was fraying. The wealth held by the top 1 percent was plunging because of economic stagnation in the core capitalist economies. Relatively generous social welfare states in the West combined with demands from radicalized minority groups and women for a share of the pie plus assertive decolonized nations in the Third World were squeezing capital.

Neoliberalism was the solution, and Ronald Reagan sold it with slogans like “government is the problem.” But Americans first had to buy the idea that freedom flowed organically from the market, and that government’s role was to maximize opportunity — by “getting out of the way” — so we could succeed or fail by our own initiative.

For all the talk about the rule of markets, neoliberalism was about an upward transfer of wealth. By 1990 wealth and income for the super-rich was near pre-WWII levels. Government was still needed to bail out capital as financial bubbles became the norm, impose austerity on Third World countries, bomb rogue states back into submission, and police and surveil the domestic front.

ROSE-COLORED RACISM

The ideology of white supremacy was central to Reagan’s America through stereotypes like teenage mothers, welfare cheats, gangbangers and illegal immigrants. Reagan spent years spreading race fantasies: social programs were “demeaning” and “insulting” to Blacks and Latinos, welfare queens were driving Cadillacs, and “strap-ping young bucks” were buying T-bone steaks with food stamps. It helped convince a critical mass of the public to support slashing social welfare as being in their interest.

Similarly, the war on terror needed a motivating ideology. Hollywood did its part before Sept. 11 with hundreds of movies that traded in Orientalist imagery, as documented in books like *Reel Bad Arabs*. One writer

observed about the popular image of the Arab, “He is robed and turbaned, sinister and dangerous, engaged mainly in hijacking airlines and blowing up public buildings.”

Other ideas found new currency after 9/11 like the “clash of civilizations” thesis. Bush could not endorse it outright, needing the support of Arab and Muslim countries to wage war, but he nodded toward it with talk of “a struggle for civilization” involving a fight “between tyranny and freedom.” With Obama in the White House, much of the right has unabashedly donned the Islamophobia mantle, the popular version of the clash of civilizations.

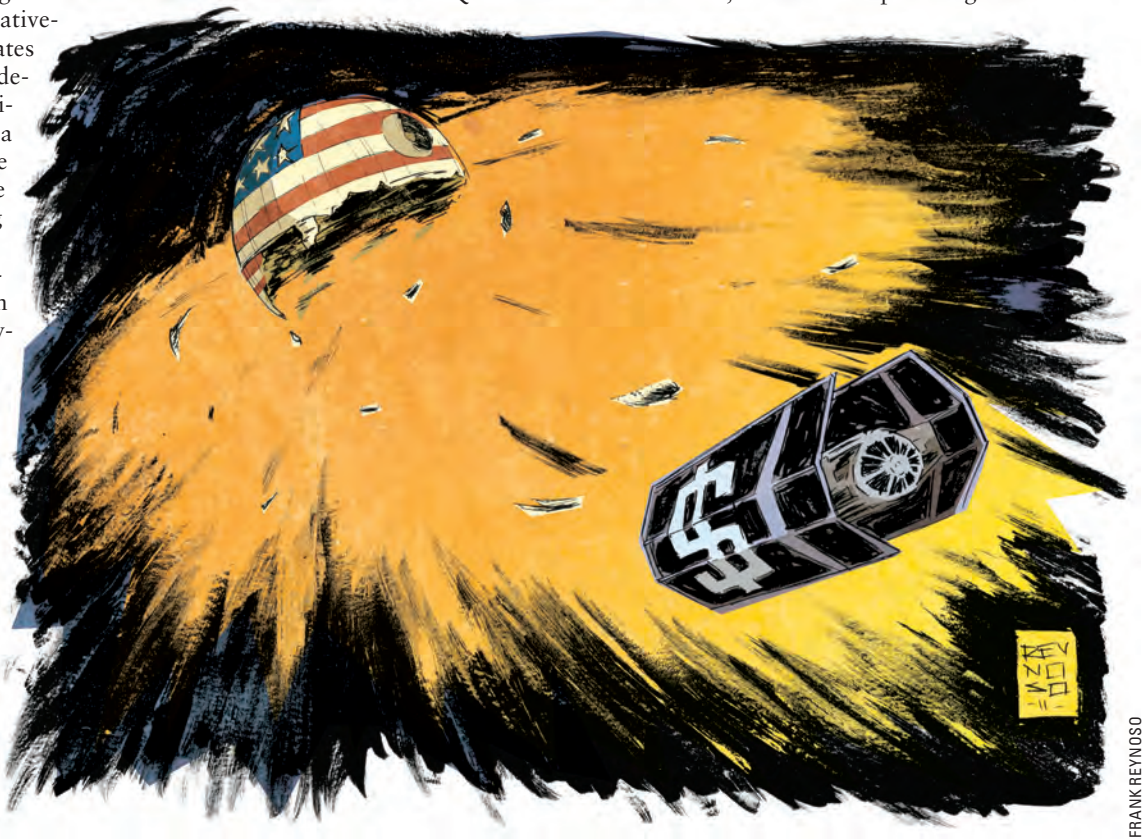
That the war on terror is a meaningless phrase — how do you wage war on an abstract noun? — is a given. Nonetheless, it has been normalized because it is the package for endless war. Even the killing of bin Laden is just another waymaker, with Hillary Clinton proclaiming, “the battle to stop al-Qaeda and its

tries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. It has deployed Special Operations forces to 75 countries as part of “a largely secret U.S. war against al-Qaeda and other radical groups,” according to the *Washington Post*. And it continues to expand its global network of rendition, secret prisons and torture.

The forces of the state, corporate interests and their propagandists had a tremendous amount of power to popularize the post-9/11 mindset, especially given how it was underpinned by racist narratives and imperial hubris. But it’s easy to forget there was a counter-narrative that had a wide following before 9/11.

ANOTHER WORLD

Coming out of the WTO talks derailed by popular protests in Seattle in 1999, the alter-globalization was a true global movement, it proclaimed “another world is possible,” and had capitalist globalization on



FRANK REYNOLDS

syndicate of terror will not end with the death of bin Laden. [We must] redouble our efforts.”

Even more pernicious is “everything changed.” It assumes American exceptionalism. Everything could have changed only if the United States was the only country that mattered. All at once, it denies history, marks a closing of “the end of history” — the alleged triumph of the market and liberal democracy — and restarts the historical clock anew.

Everything changed really meant nothing had changed except the complete unshackling of state power. The latest renewal of the Patriot Act, until 2015, retains the National Security letters, roving wiretaps, sweeping record gathering and “lone wolf” provisions. Direct military spending now in excess of \$1 trillion annually combined with domestic austerity is whittling down the state to purely repressive functions of policing, surveillance, detention and war. The United States is openly bombing six coun-

tries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.

The reality that neoliberalism benefited an elite few, while the rest of humanity coped with the social and ecological devastation, was inspiring tens of thousands to nonviolently shut down meetings of institutions like the WTO, IMF and G-8 that regulate the capitalist order.

The World Bank-IMF meeting for late September 2001 in Washington, D.C., had been cancelled ahead of time (according to an inside source) because it was decided police forces would be unable to control the tens of thousands of people expected in the streets. Organizers were preparing to take the fight directly to capital with a global day of action against multiple stock exchanges in November 2001. Still another reminder of elite fear at the time was that the *New York Times* speculated that anarchists were behind the hijackings and attacks.

Thus, 9/11 was a godsend for Empire. It could construct a harsher authoritarian or-

der at home and embark on a “New American Century” overseas. There was nothing pre-ordained about this, particularly the collapse of the U.S.-based alter-globalization movement. But there was a logic to it.

Market fundamentalism is a centrifugal force. When profit and cost-benefit analysis dominate social relations, then social forces the state relies upon — nation, community, kinship, spirituality — are torn apart. The solution is an authoritarianism based on a consensual ideology, which was the free market democratic liberalism and anti-Communism during the Cold War.

NEOCONNED

It’s why neoconservatives play such an important role from the 1970s on. David Harvey writes in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* that the neocons promote a militarized order as the solution to the chaos of the market, and they seek to restore “higher-order values that will form the stable center of the body politics” such as cultural nationalism, family values and Evangelical Christianity.

The post-9/11 ideology updates the militarization and moralism with the war on terror, everything’s changed and Islamophobia. It’s remarkably crude — “they hate us for our freedoms” — but it sells.

Far from reviving Empire abroad or the economy at home, the war on terror has accelerated the decline. China lacks the tools of global rule that the United States still possesses, especially the Pentagon and the dollar, but it is catching up economically.

As evidenced by the global economic rut, China’s hybrid system of authoritarian state-organized capitalism has proved far more resilient than the U.S. system of predatory private corporations. China can enter cutting-edge markets like solar panel, wind turbine and lithium battery manufacturing and through use of robust state subsidies and planning become the world leader in barely a decade.

Yet China is in no position to challenge U.S. hegemony. Other than Russia, major regional powers like Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and India are still in the American camp. China is offering the Renminbi for settling international trade, but it will take decades to supplant the U.S. dollar and treasury securities. The United Nations may be moribund, but Washington can still bend it to its needs most of the time, and China’s military is decades behind the Pentagon. Perhaps most important, China does not offer a social order that differs in how work, public, educational and community life are organized, and in fact has adopted many of the harshest practices of 19th century capitalism.

NEW WORLD DISORDER

In this context, the United States can spread disorder as shown by the six active wars, but it has largely ceased to be a land power. Its control of the skies, space and electronic mediums allows it to disrupt but not to dominate.

This has given rise to new power configurations. Latin America’s left turn had made the IMF irrelevant in that region, undermining the U.S.-organized financial order. The Arab Spring has diminished U.S. political influence in the Middle East and gives lie

to the ideology that Arab and Muslim nations are irrational, violent and backward. Turkey and Egypt are pulling away from being Israel’s watchdogs and provide a buffer against an attack on Iran. And the spread of popular public occupations now to Europe echoes the period when another world did seem possible. Another hopeful sign is that more U.S.-based organizing is opting for occupations rather than legal, polite and ineffective protests.

The disorder also extends to the domestic economy. Whereas IMF austerity programs used to be for the periphery — from Latin America to the East Asia — the austerity has now moved to Greece, Ireland, Spain, Great Britain and the United States. The ideology is the same: when choosing between the health of bondholders and the health of human societies, the bondholders always win.

DYSFUNCTION

The United States is incapable of managing the capitalist economy rationally. In August, Ben Bernanke diagnosed the housing crisis, political dysfunction and the “extraordinarily high level of long-term unemployment” as the main symptoms crippling the economy. Warren Buffet has been pleading for the government to raise taxes on the super-rich. Influential economist Nouriel Roubini said in the last few years there has been “a massive redistribution of income from labor to capital, from wages to profit ... Karl Marx had it right, at some point capitalism can self-destroy itself.” Bill Gross, chief investment officer of the giant bond fund Pimco, said to “arrest America’s dangerous economic slide,” Washington needs to provide refinancing relief for homeowners, provide loans to small business, and rebuild the nation’s decaying roads, bridges and airports so the government can create jobs directly because the “private sector is not going to do it.”

In other words, they are all calling for government jobs, higher taxation on the rich and more stimulus to bail out capitalism. But the political class is busy force-feeding us austerity coated in trillion-dollar war budgets.

The philosopher Hannah Arendt once observed that Empire abroad requires tyranny at home. The post-9/11 police state has proved useful in suppressing “enemies”: the threat within, Arab and Muslim communities; the social threat, the left; and the demographic threat, Latinos.

Ideology has outlived the events. Islamophobia mobilizes support for an endless war. Suppressing the left has scattered radical social opposition to the dominant order, and the war against Latino immigrants has been useful in disciplining labor by creating shadow armies of fearful workers that drive down wages and which corporations can prey on.

As tragic as the events of September 11, 2001 were, they are fast becoming a historical blip because the only real change was a speeding up of imperial decline. Shortly after the attacks, the historian Immanuel Wallerstein saw two paths forward for the American hegemon. One was a soft decline. The other was a crash landing. It’s not hard to see which path we’ve been on since 9/11.

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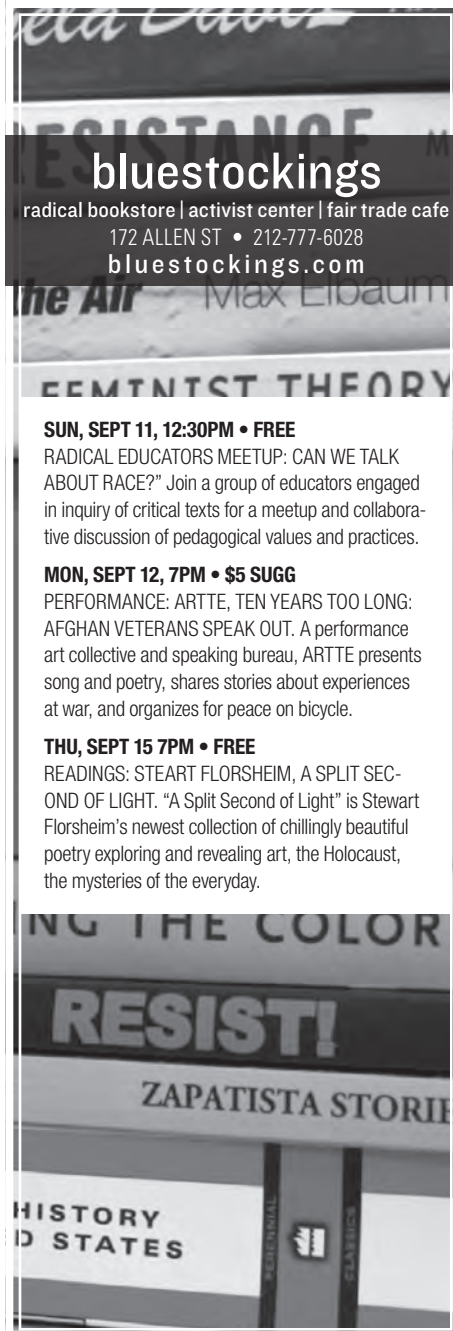
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HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!

Hosted by movement lawyers Heidi Boghosian, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild; Michael Ratner, President, Center for Constitutional Rights; Michael Smith, New York City attorney and author

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RISE OF THE MACHINES

The September 11 attacks were a tragedy for the world and a boon for military companies. From aerial drones and iris scanners to hand-held lasers and duct tape, the drive to prevent terrorism — or at least our fear of it — has taken some sinister technological turns.

— **MANNY JALONSKI**
Arun Gupta contributed to this report.



‘THE DAZZLER’
The Dazzler is a directed-energy weapon that shoots a high-powered laser to temporarily blind and disorient people. Hand-held models have a range of 1,000 feet while vehicle-mounted models have ranges exceeding 1.5 miles. The “vomit-inducing” gun is sold only to police forces and private security contractors for around \$1 million a pop, but using instructions widely available on the internet home-made versions can be built for less than \$250 in parts.



UNIVERSAL FORENSICS EXTRACTION DEVICE
Since 2008, Michigan police have used these machines to surreptitiously download phone book data, text messages, call history, passwords and SIM card data, according to the maker of the devices, Cellebrite. The Michigan ACLU has, to no avail, requested records on police use of the devices for more than three years. Besides a possible violation of the Fourth Amendment, the ACLU also wants to know if minorities are being disproportionately targeted.



THE ‘ADVANCED POLYGRAPH KIOSK’
Travelers entering the country would be placed in a kiosk, shown a series of pictures and have a laser measure blood pressure, a thermal camera take their body temperature and an eye tracker detect eye movement and pupil dilation. The purpose is to reveal when someone is especially stressed or fearful. While airports are interested in the technology to ferret out smugglers and undocumented immigrants, prototypes are considered “promising but flawed.”



MAGNETIC VISIBILITY
A tinkered magnetic resonance imaging machine that “can peer through whatever container you’re carrying,” identifying specific chemical contents of gels and liquids. The technology, however, is easily confused by florescent ballasts, smart phones and even laptops capable of wi-fi service.



LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION
Coordinated camera networks, in conjunction with data-sifting software, monitor for specific license plates. A similar system is being used to track vehicles in and out of the United States. Intended to help with “amber alerts” and tracking stolen cars, the system is also being used to nab drivers who have unpaid traffic tickets. Data is regularly stored for up to five years.



THE INTERNET ‘KILL SWITCH’
Making bogus claims that hackers could open the floodgates of the Hoover Dam, some in Congress want to create a way of shutting off internet traffic – just like Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak did in January. While the kill switch remains a goal of neocons like Sen. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., multiple bills have failed to get out of committee. A similar technology is also being considered for cell phones.



UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE
With battle-tested abilities to conduct surveillance and deal death from above, the Pentagon boasts a staggering 7,000 aerial drones that minimize risks to U.S. soldiers (never mind the incinerated children and wedding party guests). Armed U.S. drones are currently operating in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.



‘THE PORNO SCANNER’
As an alternative to “enhanced pat-downs,” whole-body imaging systems are being used to scan airport passengers for hidden explosives in the wake of the “underwear bomber” (one shudders to imagine the technology should an “urethra bomber” arise). While Rapiscan and SafeView scanning machines were originally only used for domestic passenger flights, the machines are now also being used by the military and in courthouses.

Technologies include backscatter X-rays that reveal anatomy in explicit detail, which critics call “a virtual strip search.” A public outcry has not slowed the Department of Homeland Security from moving to make the machines “the primary method of screening.” Despite government claims that the “scanned images cannot be stored or recorded” that’s precisely what’s been happening. One machine in Florida was found to have more than 35,000 images stored in it, and one model can record, store and transmit the images.



SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS
The U.S. surveillance camera industry revenue is estimated at \$3.5 billion per year, and 30 million cameras have been installed nationwide in the last decade. States along the Mexican border are using extreme long-range cameras that claim ranges of more than 20 miles in daylight. Cities are also building vast surveillance networks, with more than 2,000 cameras in New York City’s “Ring of Steel.” Taking the American lead, countries like Syria and Bahrain are installing electronic surveillance networks along their borders as well as internally. And China has installed more than 10 million surveillance cameras in the last five years.



TERRORIST INFORMATION AWARENESS PROGRAM
Spearheaded by DARPA starting in 2002, this program was aimed at compiling any “legally accessible” database, including public or private transaction records. The \$20 million program quickly met resistance, with Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., calling it “the most expansive, far-reaching surveillance program ever proposed.” Among creepier parts of the program is Human Identification at a Distance, which uses “activity-specific biometrics” such as gait- and facial-recognition technology to identify people in large crowds.



DUCT TAPE
On the eve of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Homeland Security Secretary Tom ridge urged Americans to buy plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal their homes in case of a biological or chemical weapons attack. While the plan was widely mocked, and considered utterly ineffective, retailers like Home Depot and Lowe’s benefitted from the panic-induced buying. Eight years later the government website ready.gov still recommends duct tape and plastic sheeting to create a “shelter-in-place.” In February 2005, two months after resigning his post, Ridge joined the board of Home Depot, Inc.

9/11 FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Leave the commemorative plates and coins for grandma. The digital generation demands cooler trinkets and toys to memorialize the deaths of thousands of innocents. Stock up on these patriotic products to show the terrorists they may take our lives, but they will never take our freedoms.

— MANNY JALONSKI

Arun Gupta contributed to this report.



9/11 TEDDY BEARS

Finally, a toy that brings together militarism and nap time. Dressed in fatigues with an American flag sewn on the sleeve, this adorable plush bear sways and moves its mouth as it sings, "And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free."



NASCAR COMMEMORATIVE MATCHBOX CARS

Are your kids just not "getting" the importance of commercializing national tragedy? Toy cars are here to the rescue! And since these mini-vehicles don't require gas, there's no need to worry about bankrolling terrorist plots hatched by Saudi princes.



9/11 COMMEMORATIVE KNIVES

Do seven inches of deadly steel mix well with your nationalistic urges? Make sure you "never forget" by purchasing a weapon that combines the most fashionable in stabbing technology with your most atavistic political views.



OSAMA BIN LADEN IS DEAD MOUSEPAD

For the tech-savvy American exceptionalist with an eye for pragmatic propaganda, this is the must-have accessory for those long nights trolling the Daily Kos with comments like, "If you hate America so much why don't you move to Jihadistan?"



OSAMA BIN LADEN TALKING ACTION FIGURE

Uttering such phrases as "My turban is too tight" and "I make big mistake," the Osama bin Laden Talking Action Figure line also includes an Osama figure sporting pink lingerie. No word yet on a Zbigniew Brzezinski endorsement.



ALAN JACKSON "PATRIOT" GUITAR

Woody Guthrie be damned! Surprise a patriotic troubadour with this autographed red, white and blue reminder that Alan Jackson is still not done profiting from 9/11.



OSAMA BIN LADEN PUNCHING PUPPET

The perfect toy for all the Muslim bashers in your life, this puppet has two levers that control the arms and can be purchased with assorted attire. Let your freedom fists fly and watch Osama wiggle in fear.



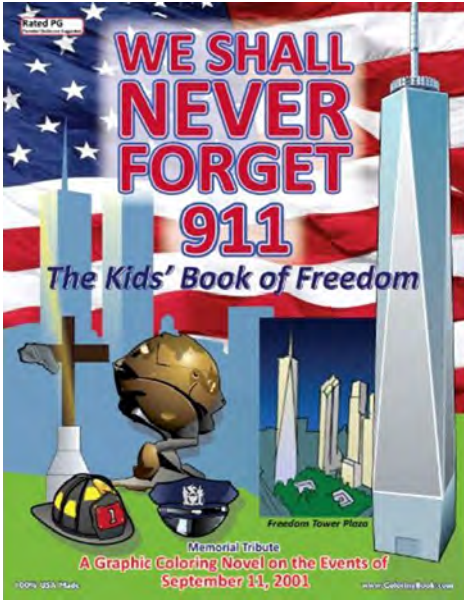
9/11 MEMORIAL WINE

Officially sanctioned by the 9/11 Memorial Board, these Merlots and Chardonnays start with a fine nose of victimization, turn velvety in the mouth with revenge and finish with a distinct tang of nativism.



COMMEMORATIVE TIE

Wish there was a professional way to display your chauvinism? Fret not, compatriot, you can show off your zeal with this perfect mix of corporate chic and morbid self-righteousness.



THE KIDS' BOOK OF FREEDOM

Bringing terrorism to coloring time, this "kid-friendly" book encourages children to color in scenes of Osama's execution and reminds them that "[t]hese crazy people hate the American way of life because we are FREE."

I Was a ‘Domestic Terrorist’

TALES FROM A POST-9/11 AMERICA

By Brad Crowder

EDITOR’S NOTE: In August 2008, Brad Crowder and David McKay, two young activists from Austin, Texas, travelled to St. Paul, Minnesota, to protest the Republican National Convention. After a trailer full of their supplies and home-made shields were seized by St. Paul police without explanation, the two sought retaliation. **THE NIGHT OF AUG. 31** Crowder and McKay assembled eight Molotov cocktails in the building they were staying in near the convention center. The next day they decided not to use them, but failed to dispose of the devices before leaving for protests. Both were arrested for disorderly conduct on Sept. 1; McKay was released but Crowder remained in jail. For months an older activist and FBI informant had been goading them to take stronger action, telling them he was going to St. Paul to “shut the fucker down.” **ON THE MORNING OF SEPT. 2** — the day Sarah Palin was introduced to the world — McKay was awakened by a cop’s rifle pointing at his face. Labeled by officials as “domestic terrorists” and the “Texas Two” by supporters, they found themselves the subject of a high-profile government case meant to justify tens of millions of dollars in security expenses for the convention. Crowder was sentenced to two years in jail and was released last year, while McKay was sentenced to four years. **THE FOLLOWING** is Brad Crowder’s first published account of his experience, an *Indydependent* exclusive.

It began with the sound of the cold metal ratchet, the pressure gripping my wrists and squeezing all the way up to my heart. A brief, almost flippant sentence uttered by Special Agent Christopher Langert signified my terrifying new reality: “Mr. Crowder, you are under arrest by the FBI.”

Five days earlier, I had been arrested by the cops in Minneapolis for “Failure to Disperse from an Unlawful Assembly.” We had been rounded up en masse. I had just seen David surrender to the police and witnessed another cop wield his baton like a bat around the head of a photojournalist. Another comrade, who I had known from antiracist and antifascist organizing in the past, was with me. Tears were streaming down his face; he was screaming at the police, his voice a poignant mix of rage, indignation and helplessness.

“Noah, come on man, we’ve got to go.” I pressed against his chest, trying to keep him from being separated from the herd to be picked off by black-clad jackals who carried their fangs in their hands and on their belts.

But it was too late, and we had been corralled into a parking lot. The ranks closed ahead of us as we ran, turning to see another line of professional violence close off each avenue of freedom. The dark noose quickly began shrinking, choking us off. I had seen protest videos before. I knew what was coming.

“Noah! We gotta get down!” I grabbed him by the shoulder and we went belly down on the asphalt amid the chaos. I looked up at the sky and saw it fill with black. A boot came down on my back, pinning me. I turned my head in a pathetic attempt to escape the spray. A stinging cloud soaked my long, blonde hair, hit the asphalt and splashed across my face and eyes. I felt the oily, peppery stench of capitalism, of the

state, clinging to my flesh and burning it. I managed to look up to see a riot cop barreling toward a videographer. He was backpedaling, camera in one hand, press credentials in the other, pleading, “But I’m press! I’m press!” It seemed naive: a sweet faith in goodness and reason regardless of the batshit craziness going on all around.

That cop never missed a step, plowing into the journalist with a full head of steam, leaving him splayed across the parking lot with his camera destroyed. Let this be a lesson to those inclined to reason with the state. It contains no reason; it has only command, obedience and violence.

HARD TIME

My hands were zip-tied, and I was bundled onto a bus to be taken to Ramsey County Jail. As far as I knew, I was looking at a petty misdemeanor charge that carried a \$300 bail. I had been arrested before for a \$20 sack of weed and various traffic fines that I had refused to pay due to a combination of poverty, principle and irresponsibility. Jail wasn’t a new experience for me, so I was nervous but relatively lighthearted.

That changed two days later, when I heard the door to my unit slam shut. I was in a cell by myself at the time, lying on my bunk and trying to block out the burn of the pepper spray that still soaked my hair and clothes. Ultimately they held me for about five days covered in pepper spray, unable to escape that god-awful burn. My hands were beginning to crack due to my incessant hand washing. I held them to a vent to blow the pepper off. I doused them in milk. Without a change of clothes and a shower, it was all just a practice in desperate futility. I still really fucking resent those assholes for that.

Anyway, I heard the door slam. I saw David being led into the unit by a pair of men who wore their credentials on chains around their necks and clearly shopped at Men’s Wearhouse.

David was wearing completely different clothing from the protest. This confused me and I became very scared. What I didn’t know at the time was that David’s home had been raided by the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

I became scared because David and I had made eight Molotov Cocktails the night before the protests began. The fire-bomb of the poor: they consisted of motor oil and gasoline poured into wine bottles that were duct-taped closed, with cotton tampons rubber-banded to the sealed necks. When the tampon was lit and the bottle thrown, the shattered glass would release the accelerant to be ignited by the flame. We were stupid for making them,

but smart for not using them. When we woke up the next day we decided not to use them and to destroy them when we had the chance. What had gone wrong? Something had clearly spiraled out of control, but I had no idea what lay in store for me.

WHO’S THE TERRORIST?

I learned soon enough that our faces were all over the media. I was now a “domestic terrorist.” They were serious.

I wasn’t allowed a phone call for a week. All my family and friends learned of my

port me from state to federal custody. When I arrived at the intake, the booking area was stuffed with bodies, around 70, all coming in from anti-immigrant ICE raids. Processing was going to take a lifetime.

They split David and me up into isolation cells consisting of a concrete slab on the floor and a metal toilet/sink combination that lacked hot water. What I thought was a frosted window turned out to be a mind-numbing light that never switched off, totally disorienting me as to the passage of time. The walls were covered with a repul-



LOCKED UP: Protesting the 2008 Republican National Convention, Crowder was pepper sprayed, incarcerated and eventually prosecuted as a ‘domestic terrorist.’

fate on the news. My mom saw it on the local Midland news. Two close friends saw my mug shot plastered across the big-screen television at a club in Austin.

I couldn’t process any of it. The term “domestic terrorist” sounded so melodramatic. I could never really build any sort of connection between my identity and the term itself. Hell, as far as it seemed to me, David and I were the only ones terrified.

IN THE PIT

When Special Agent Langert ratcheted those cold metal cuffs on my wrist, it was to trans-

pire greasy paste. I never figured out what the substance was, but I didn’t investigate because of a fear of what it might have been.

I sat on the concrete slab, disgusted but thankful I was only going to be in there while they processed all the immigration raid victims into the general population. Hours seemed to pass before a guard cracked the door to have me processed. At long last this included a shower and a change of clothes from my street wear into jailhouse oranges. They processed my paperwork and I was anxious to move from the dungeon in which they had housed me.



DON’T MOURN: After two years in prison, Brad Crowder is currently studying economics in college and vows to keep organizing “until I’m dead.”

When the guard placed me back into my isolation cell, he looked in, paused and then asked why I hadn’t gotten bedding. My heart sank as I realized I was stuck in this disgusting pit on 24-hour lockdown. Two days in I received a paper from the prison administration, stating that I was being held in isolation for “my safety and the safety of the institution.”

After a few days I was taken to my first federal court hearing. I sat in the Chief Justice’s courtroom with my attorney, Andrew, and looked back at the galley to see reporters scattered around. I turned to him and asked in a quiet, shaky voice if this was a high-profile case. He pursed his lips and bobbed his head yes. At first these were terrifying, surreal ordeals. Eventually they became another numbing routine of incarceration.

WHO POLICES THE POLICE STATE?

By Manny Jalonschi and Ann Schneider

Out of the rubble of 9/11 Congress and the White House constructed the edifice of a stronger and more intrusive security and surveillance state. Court rulings are central to this state as this is where limits can be placed or policies upheld. The following are some of the most important cases over the last decade.

Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project

This June 2010 Supreme Court decision upheld the Bush and Obama administrations’ contention that “material support” crimes include even legal advocacy by human rights advocates on behalf of any officially designated foreign terrorist organization. Human rights groups that had provided peaceful conflict resolution training to the Kurdistan Workers Party and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam won a lower court ruling that the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act unconstitutionally prohibited “training,” “service” and “expert advice” to groups on the U.S. terrorist list. The FBI used this Supreme Court ruling to raid the homes of solidarity activists in

Minneapolis and Chicago last year.

Ashcroft v. Iqbal

In May 2009 the Supreme Court threw out the complaint of a Muslim immigrant who had been held as a “person of interest” after being rounded up in November 2001. The high court ruled that his allegation that FBI Director Robert Mueller and Attorney General John Ashcroft acted with intent to discriminate against Muslims was “not plausible.” This ruling raises the bar for plaintiffs alleging discrimination before they are allowed to engage in discovery or obtain access to the government’s files. In a related, pending case, *Turkmen v. Ashcroft*, involving racial profiling brought on behalf of Muslims, Arab and South Asian men, a federal judge stripped the claims for prolonged detention in June 2006.

“State Secrets” Privilege

The Obama administration is continuing Bush’s use of this doctrine to cut off access to the courts at the initial pleading stage. It was invoked to prevent five victims of the Bush “extraordinary rendition” program from suing the CIA contractor, Jeppesen Dataplan Inc., which operated the flights to Egypt, Morocco and Afghanistan. It was invoked to argue for

“batons.” It was a pure work of fiction. Nothing approximating a “wooden baton” existed. All I could do was sit in my chair and stare dumbfounded around the courtroom. I knew, abstractly, that the system was crooked, but this was concrete reality.

The same officer was asked why they had conducted the raid without a warrant. His answer pissed me off as much as the manufactured evidence. He said that given the protests, the department was in “disruptive” and not “investigative” mode. Since they were more interested in disrupting protest activity than in prosecuting under due process of law, there was no worry about “tainting” any evidence. The only check that was supposed to prevent illegal raids was tossed out the window with total legality.

TRUTH-TELLING

What needs to be said about my trip through the gantlet that is the Federal Criminal Justice System can never be properly articulated in a book or a movie or a miniseries. The truth won’t fit into those boxes. Corners and edges of the story must be clipped.

I want, desperately, to write about what I learned from inmates. I want to write volumes, inspirational volumes, extolling the humanity of those I met inside the god-awful warehouse that is prison, that these men are neither angels or demons, in all their fucked-up, contradictory glory. I want to defend David against the sloppy misstatements and outright lies and attacks leveled against him. I want to put his one lie against the wall of lies built against him by this system that postures so self-righteously over the bodies it jails and buries.

But I can’t in any medium. There can be no representation of the truth. It can only be leveled by the historical movement of myself, of David, of Cowboy, Ghost, Peanut, Bob and all the others, inside and out, slammed by a twisted and historically irrelevant system. The truth can be told in only one way, through the revolution of this system, this shit. The truth of racism can only be articu-

lated in the revolution against it. The truth of prisons, of terrorism, of state violence, of poverty, of war and hopelessness can only be articulated in their negation.

Am I a domestic terrorist? It is a question I often asked myself, and others asked me how it felt to be labeled as such. The truth is it didn’t mean anything at all. The term is deeply politicized. Kicking in people’s doors at 3 a.m. and raiding their home at gunpoint is terrorism, whether in Baghdad or Baltimore. Building bombs may be really stupid, but at least David and I had enough of a moral compass to choose not to use them, as opposed to dropping them on civilians and cities.

But then again I’m a “red-blooded” white American. Yes, I was targeted for my activism, but not for my name, for my faith, or the color of my skin. I’m not Muslim. And that is who is being targeted, spied upon, egged on, entrapped and then destroyed en masse. Domestic terrorism is an absurd term, and in its absurdity it is terrifyingly dangerous.

Would you take Bernie Madoff seriously if he called you a crook? Why should I take the Feds — the most bomb-laden and -deploying gaggle of lost souls on the planet — seriously for calling me a terrorist?

My life today is fine, except for knowing how many great people are in prison: David in particular. I’m in college studying economics. It’s terrible, but for some reason I love it. I work at a local sandwich shop, the same one I worked at before I was arrested. I still organize and will continue to do so until I’m dead. I look at the Arab Spring, the European rebellions, and the rumblings of working people in the United States, and I see clearly on whose side history rests.

They say I’m a domestic terrorist. I say they are on their way out. Let’s see who’s right.

Brad and David’s story is told in the award-winning new film, Better This World. For more information, visit betterthisworld.com.

In 2001, when it dismissed al-Kidd’s damages suit against Ashcroft.

The USA PATRIOT Act: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001

The grandfather of post-9/11 surveillance laws, the original act allows the government to ask any third-party holder for financial records, phone records, travel plans and even video rental records without disclosing to the investigated person that such a request has been made. The Patriot Act also introduced America to National Security Letters, which allow the FBI to investigate people on a mere assertion that it is relevant to a national security investigation. Over 24,000 such letters were issued in 2010. Within weeks of the 9/11 attacks, 36 states passed their own version of the Patriot Act.

Handschu 11

Judge Charles Haight’s 2007 decision un-cuffing the NYPD from spying based on political beliefs came to its logical end in July when AP reporter Adam Goldman exposed how the New York police in conjunction with the CIA had created a “Demographics Unit” that “singled out Muslim communities for surveillance and infiltration.”

Islamophobia: The Network that Hates

BY ARUN GUPTA

American history is no stranger to opportunists posing as experts on fifth columnists or foreign subversives plotting to undermine our hallowed way of life.

Nearly a century before Sarah Palin, there was Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson. Months after the 1919 Seattle general strike, Hanson resigned his post, penned *Americanism*

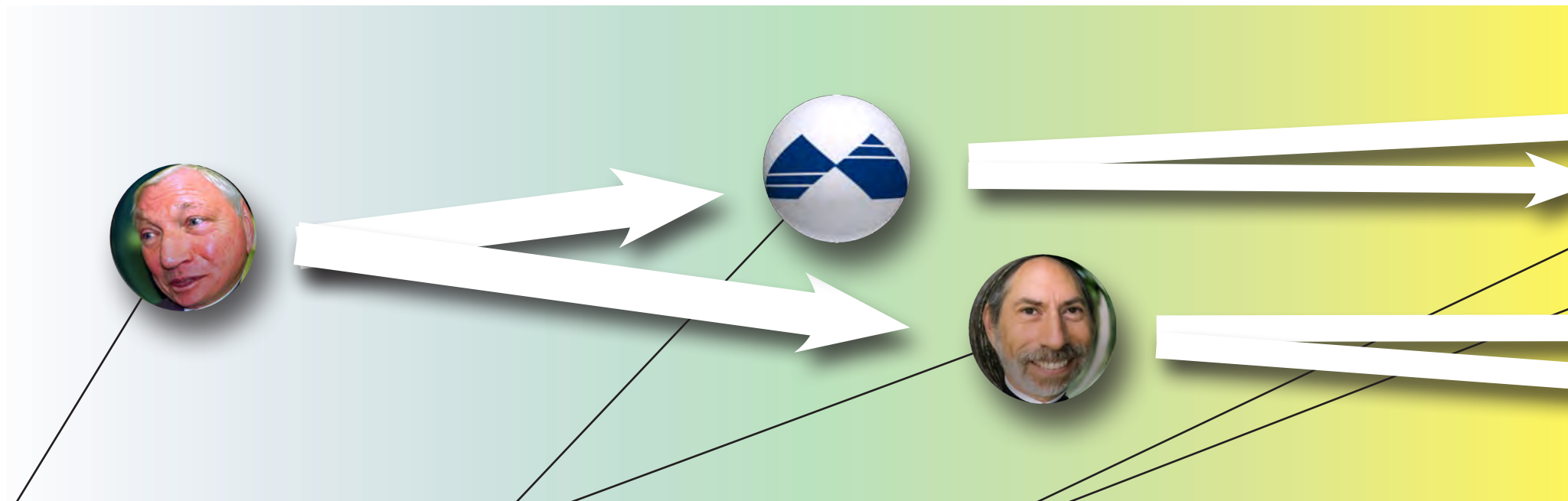
Versus Bolshevism, in which he warned that “the preaching and teaching of anarchy, syndicalism, sabotage and Bolshevism is being carried out throughout the nation,” and cashed in with a lucrative speaking tour.

During the McCarthy era, in addition to the infamous junior Senator from Wisconsin, there was a legion of self-styled experts on the grave threat posed by the monolithic Communist menace. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover scrutinized in *Masters of Deceit* the

Marxist method of “divide and conquer” so as to “soften up a democracy.” In *The Politician*, candy manufacturer and John Birch Society founder Robert Welch labeled FDR, Truman and Eisenhower as knowing agents of the Communist conspiracy. Fred Schwartz of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, “once suggested that communists promote abortion, pornography, homosexuality, venereal disease and mass murder ... as a way to weaken the moral fiber of

America and pave the way for a communist takeover,” according to Political Research Associates, a group of scholars and journalists that studies the right.

Historian Richard Hofstadter argued in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* that panic over foreign subversion stretches back hundreds of years. In the late 18th century, Scottish scientist John Robison stoked hysteria in the fledgling United States with his tract on the Illuminati, claiming it was



FUNDERS

In its new report, *Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*, the Center for American Progress describes the funders as the “lifeblood” of the network. It notes, “seven charitable groups provided \$42.6 million to Islamophobia think tanks between 2001 and 2009 — funding that supports the scholars and experts.”

Donors Capital Fund — Contributed more than \$17 million to the Clarion Fund in 2008, which helped pay for a DVD the Clarion Fund distributed, *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West*, to more than 28 million swing-state voters before the 2008 presidential election.

Richard Mellon Scaife foundations — Labeled the “Funding Father of the Right” by the *Washington Post*, Scaife is worth an estimated \$1.2 billion and chairs three foundations that contributed \$7.88 million to three Islamophobic groups, including the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation — The foundation that bears the deceased brothers names (both of whom were members of the John Birch Society) started bankrolling neoconservatives in the 1970s, backed Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker’s attack on labor unions and provided \$5.37 million in funding to anti-Muslim organizations.

Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation — With a mission that includes “combating media bias against Israel and the Jewish people, Israel advocacy, and democracy defense,” this and another related foundation and trust have spread \$1.14 million among seven different groups including ACT! for America.

Russell Berrie Foundation — Contributed \$3.11 million to the Islamophobe network, with nearly 90 percent going to the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation.

Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund — These two related funds have pumped \$2.82 million in various organizations, including \$2.32 million to the Middle East Forum.

Fairbrook Foundation — Controlled by Joyce and Aubrey Chernick, whose estimated fortune is \$750 million. Investigative journalist Max Blumenthal writes, “Chernick has provided funding to groups ranging from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and CAMERA, a right-wing, pro-Israel, media-watchdog outfit, to violent Israeli settlers living on Palestinian lands and figures like the pseudo-academic author Robert Spencer, who is largely responsible for popularizing conspiracy theories about the coming conquest of the West by Muslim fanatics seeking to establish a worldwide caliphate.”

MISINFORMATION EXPERTS

Frank Gaffney — A Reagan-era defense department official, *Washington Times* columnist and founder of the Center for Security Policy, which published *Sharia: The Threat to America*, and created stop911mosque.com in 2010. Gaffney accuses the Obama administration of perpetrating “official U.S. submission to Islam,” and claims conservative groups have been infiltrated by Islamists and deems Gen. David Petraeus guilty of submission to sharia.

David Yerushalmi of the Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE) — Counsel for the Center for Security Policy, Stop the Madrasa and Stop Islamization of America, Yerushalmi co-authored *Sharia: The Threat to America*, which warns the Muslim Brotherhood is “effectively imposing shariah blasphemy laws in America” by demanding “tolerance of its medieval religious practices” and “repress[ing] free speech.” Apparently one of the Brotherhood’s insidious methods meant to achieve the “seditious goals of its civilization jihad” in America is through the Muslim birth rate.

Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum — Having served on the U.S. Institute for Peace as a Bush appointee, Pipes is the dean of Islamophobes. His organizations include Campus Watch, Islamist Watch and the Legal Project. Pipes calls for increased police profiling of Muslims and Arabs, writes that 10 to 15 percent of all Muslims are Islamists and “must be considered potential killers,” and supports a public ban of the veil because it’s a “terrorist-enabling” garment.

Robert Spencer of Jihad Watch and Stop Islamization of America — Director of the website Jihad Watch, his work and website were cited a whopping 162 times by Anders Breivik in his 1,500-page manifesto. Spencer describes himself as “a frequent Fox News contributor,” and believes Islam is the “only major world religion with a developed doctrine and tradition of warfare against unbelievers.”

Steven Emerson of the Investigative Project on Terrorism — Accused of fabricating evidence and using front groups to funnel millions of dollars to other outfits in his control, Emerson says Islam “sanctions ... planned genocide as part of its religious doctrine.” Rep. Peter King has praised Emerson for his “expertise.”

POLITICAL FIGURES

Rep. Peter King
Newt Gingrich
Sarah Palin
Rep. Allen West
Rep. Michele Bachman

ECHO CHAMBER AND RELIGIOUS RIGHT

Fox News
Washington Times
Rush Limbaugh
Glenn Beck
Pat Robertson
John Hagee
Ralph Reed
Franklin Graham

This dime-store Manichean resurfaced with dismal predictability after the Sept. 11 attacks with a new class of demagogues, ones who specialize in spreading Islamophobia. While anti-Muslim hostility found root in the fertile soil of American nativism, Islamophobia has become a national pastime

Experts play a crucial role in the network as they receive the funding to produce hyped-up reports on nonexistent threats. The reports are disseminated through the right-wing media and prominent evangelical ministers, often becoming part of the mainstream debate.

lam, and by implication Muslims, need to be politically and socially restricted because they are a danger — Islamophobe activists search for a problem such as the “Ground Zero Mosque,” while politicians stroke the bigotry for votes.

The efforts came to fruition in 2010 with media disinformation, hate-spewing rallies and numerous attacks on mosques in the lead up to the 9/11 anniversary. Islamophobes also inspired Anders Breivik,

This report used numerous sources, particularly Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America.



Pamela Geller and Stop Islamization of America — An offshoot of Stop Islamization of Europe, SIOA was formed in 2009 by Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer. It claims “We are now in a new phase of a 1,400-year-old jihad against the kafirs (all non-Muslims everywhere),” and the consequences of “ignorance about Islam, its doctrine and purposes . . . can be nothing short of national extinction.” It was behind the “Leave Islam” ad campaign that ran on buses in New York City and Miami.

Brigitte Gabriel and ACT! for America — Head of the “largest grassroots national security organization in America” and author of *They Must Be Stopped* (guess who “they” is), Gabriel has been described as a “radical Islamophobe” by the *New York Times*. She has said Arabs “have no soul” and thinks Muslims should be prevented from seeking political office. She is a regular guest on Fox News and claims to have advised Rep. Peter King in his public hearings on “Radicalization in the American Muslim Community.”

David Horowitz and the Freedom Center — A highly effective inhabitant of the Islamophobe swamp, Horowitz has said “Middle Eastern Muslims are ‘Islamic Nazis’ who ‘want to kill Jews, that’s their agenda,” and his Freedom Center has funneled \$1 million to Robert Spencer’s Jihad Watch since 2007. The center operates multiple outlets and projects promoting Islamophobia, including FrontPage Magazine and Jihad Watch websites, the NewsReal blog, “Islamofacism Awareness Week” on hundreds of college campuses, and a weekly lunch forum and yearly conference that provide a platform for notable anti-Muslim bigots.

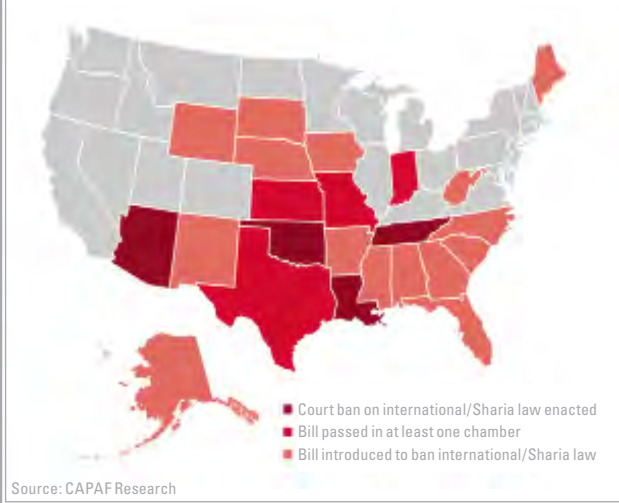
In the past year, the anti-sharia movement has gathered a full head of steam in the Deep South and Southwest, which is apparently in danger of being overrun by the Taliban. Arizona, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Tennessee have passed laws banning the use of Islamic law in state courts, which is unconstitutional, while some two dozen states have seen similar legislation introduced since 2010. David Yerushalmi has been the driving force behind the anti-sharia movement in part by developing a template for state-level bills, which have been cut and pasted from his text in at least three different states.

Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, convened hearings in March 2011 on alleged radicalization within the Muslim-American community. He has said there are “too many mosques in this country,” 85 percent of which are “ruled by the extremists,” and “we should be looking at them more carefully and finding out how we can infiltrate them.” King also authored *Vale of Tears*, a fictional account of Muslim terrorist attacks on Long Island that he called “half truth.”

A purported community coalition that opposed the Khalil Gibran International Academy, New York City's first Arabic dual-language school. Through Fox News, and New York's right-wing media, Pamela Geller, Daniel Pipes and others demonized principal Debbie Almontaser as a "9/11 denier" and "jihadist," and fomented anti-Muslim sentiment in general. Mayor Bloomberg forced Almontaser to resign in 2007, starved the school of funds and support, and announced the school's closure in April 2011.

Neither a mosque nor located at Ground Zero, Park51 is planned to be an Islamic cultural center in lower Manhattan. Pamela Geller lit the Islamophobic fires with a May 2010 post on her Atlas Shrugs blog, calling Park51 “Islamic domination and expansion ... It’s a stab in the eye of America.” By the summer, regular demonstrations at Ground Zero picked up the vicious rhetoric — portraying Islam as the enemy, with all Muslims wanting to “conquer unbelievers,” with the “mega-mosque ... an Al Qaeda triumph.” While protests quickly faded after the 9/11 anniversary, the center was injected into the national discourse and Republican candidates around the country continue to shrilly denounce it as a wedge issue. Meanwhile, civil liberty groups have documented an increase in mosque attacks, saying “the anti-mosque and anti-Muslim sentiment expressed in the opposition to Park51 was not an isolated incident.”

Twenty-three states have some kind of legislation or law that would ban the nonexistent threat of Sharia law being used in their courtrooms.



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Attica!

Ghosts of Attica
DIRECTED BY BRAD LICHTENSTEIN
ICARUS FILMS, 2001

While the upcoming tenth anniversary of the September 11 tragedy is bound to generate a massive public display of remembrance, the same attention will not befall this country's bloodiest suppression of a prison inmate uprising, forty years ago on Sept. 13. The aftermath of the Attica rebellion marked one of the grossest wide-scale abuses of power in New York history, for which victims are unlikely to ever be adequately compensated. The timely re-release of *Ghosts of Attica* chronicles their struggle over the years and details how the events they lived through were systematically misrepresented by the authorities and the media.

This documentary stresses the volatile social climate that framed the rebellion and the high political stakes riding on its outcome. Attica became a symbol of the spirit of the times because inmates framed their revolt as a fight against society's ills. Their demands for the right to decent food, medical attention, religious freedom, legal representation and political expression would be constructed as

divisive on racial grounds, since most of the incarcerated were of color and all of the guards were white. Yet the indiscriminate violence inflicted on both groups when state troopers reclaimed the prison in a ferocious nine-minute assault — killing 29 inmates and 10 guards — showed otherwise, as have survivors' ongoing bids for acknowledgment of the subsequent cover-up, geared to blame all deaths on the inmates. In its analysis, *Ghosts of Attica* demonstrates Angela Davis' argument (in *Are Prisons Obsolete?*) that the prison system is an unnecessary evil, yet a highly profitable one for the powers that be.



In 1971 the latter resided with Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who proved too steeped in his elective ambitions to negotiate with the inmates and risk appearing soft on crime. "No other employer except the government," testifies former guard Michael Smith, "could shoot and kill his employees and not be held accountable." Unbeknownst

to Smith, who was "mistaken" for an inmate and almost shot as a result, a story was fabricated that he had been castrated and his life threatened by Frank "Big Black" Smith, the inmates' security chief and one of the leading voices in *Ghosts of Attica*. After the troopers took over the prison, Smith was more brutally beaten, humiliated and tortured than any of the other inmates, an experience it took him years to be able to talk about.

In retrospect, Smith considers Attica the best, most formative experience of his life, not in the least because it brought him together with defense counsel Liz Fink, the inspirational lawyer who has dedicated her career to vindicating the inmates, attesting that "taking no political stand is being part of the problem."

After several victorious court appeals and subsequent repeals, the surviving rebels of Attica ended up accepting a meager \$12 million settlement, but for most of them the fight continues. *Ghosts of Attica* does not need the dramatizing techniques — flashy light effects and frantic camera movements —

it sporadically indulges in. Given the filmmaker's expressive use of abundant, well-edited footage and rich layering of perspectives through interviews with individuals who deserve our respect and attention, the truth is already compelling enough.

—KENNETH CRAB

Planet of the Apes

Jane's Journey
DIRECTED BY LORENZ KNAUER
DISTRIBUTED BY FIRST RUN FEATURES,
2010

Jane's Journey is a predictably, yet no less disappointingly, streamlined celebrity profile of living legend Dr. Jane Goodall, the famed primatologist whose trail-blazing observations of wild chimpanzees made her a household name over half a century ago. Over more recent decades, Goodall, now 77, has become something of a patron saint of eco-activism, traveling around the world as a self-proclaimed messenger of hope, inspiring young people to become environmentally responsible.

One of the most amazing aspects of Goodall's journey was her radical choice to live life in the public eye, a belief that was kindled when she attended a con-

ference on chimps in Chicago in 1986. Her exposure to brutal evidence of their endangerment — by killing for profit, mistreatment of captive animals used in scientific experiments and deforestation — made Goodall decide to abandon her idyllic existence in Tanzania's Gombe National Park and mount an effort to sensitize her own species to its precarious relationship with the natural world.

In *Jane's Journey*, Goodall, with trademark equanimity, reveals how she has managed to carry the peace of the forest in her heart, but she also seems to be able to deploy



her best qualities as a scientist — humility and patience — in productive interactions with people. The determination she shows by listening to personal stories re-

flects her long-ago controversial decision to refer to apes as individuals ("he" and "she"). Goodall's disposition would probably have made her one heck of a documentary filmmaker, so it's a pity *Jane's Journey* does not unfold under her own direction.

Narration from her letters and footage from home movies bear direct witness to the indomitable spirit that fuels her eloquence and sheer presence. Along with reminiscences on life in the jungle as a woman, wife — she lived out her two marriages there — and mother, they constitute the film's most interesting bits. The rest veers between hagiography and a two-hour promotional video, which neither Dame Jane nor the Jane Goodall Institute need in order to shine. Would that journeyman director Lorenz Knauer had excised unnecessary tributes by the likes of Pierce Brosnan, Angelina Jolie and Kofi Annan in favor of a more detailed look into the groups formed out of Goodall's Roots & Shoots youth initiative,

or had chosen to pursue a more involved, poetic view of her communion with nature.

—KENNETH CRAB

2 FRIENDS. 8 BOMBS. 1 FBI INFORMANT.

"RIVETING. A chilling depiction of loyalty, naivete, political zealotry and the post-9/11 security state..." — *The Washington Post*

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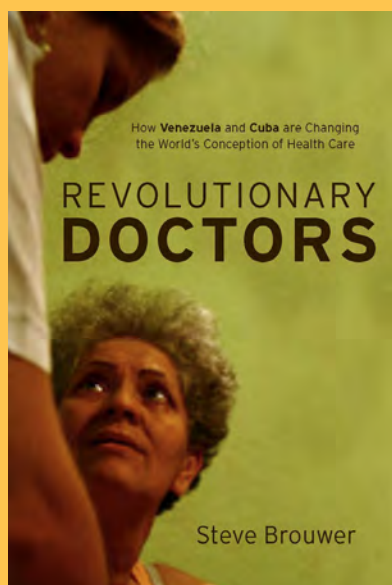
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BOOKS

Taking Stock of Modern Times

Best of Times, Worst of Times: Contemporary American Short Stories from the New Gilded Age
EDITED BY WENDY MARTIN AND CECILIA TICH
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011

Best of Times, Worst of Times grapples with the political, economic and social forces that shape our lives in the waning era of U.S. empire.

The stories vary widely in narrative form and perspective, but together they evoke a sense of what living through the last few decades in the United States was like for many. And although the world they portray is bleak, these stories are useful in a political sense for exploring the tension between individual human experience and broader structural forces working to shape who we are and how we understand the world.

Charles Bukowski's "A Day" and Miranda July's "Something That Needs Nothing" take us to the point of production itself, examining the traditional proletarian space of the factory and the traditionally overlooked economy of sex work.

These are nuanced stories, and they do a fine job of addressing the question of labor as one bound up in all the complexities of human relationships under strain, refracting the basic issues of power (and property) through the experiences of characters occupying specific social positions. For instance, Susan Straight's "Mines" is the narrative of a Black woman who is a prison guard and single mother. The story examines how she moves between the worlds of domestic and

waged work, obligated to watch over family in both places and navigating the hyper-masculine world of the prison while becoming conscious of its many injustices.

Any collection trying to capture a view of life in the late-20th and early 21st century United States must necessarily do so in a global context, and here *Best of Times, Worst of Times* succeeds. Stories like Ben Fountain's "Near-Extinct Birds of the Central Cordillera" follow Americans to other nations where they find that the influence of empire has preceded them, and Jhumpa Lahiri and Gish Jen sketch the lives of immigrant families struggling to adapt while holding on to their identities. These stories remind us that the

United States is not only being integrated into a global market but that it actively, and sometimes forcefully, exercises power and control at a global level.

In their title and introduction the editors suggest that we are living through a second Gilded Age, but I'm not sure that this is a useful comparison to make. While the Gilded Age evokes all the inequality, gross opulence and technological change of our era, it's more important to think about the current historical moment as the culmination of processes that began in the Gilded Age and are now taking on new forms. The authors in this collection share a disbelief in the "gilded" veneer — leaving the reader with an uneasy sense of decline and a lingering kind of dissatisfaction that seems to have no remedy.

— SCOTT BORCHERT



LYNNE FOSTER

End of the Line

Punching Out: One Year in a Closing Auto Plant
BY PAUL CLEMENS
DOUBLEDAY, 2011

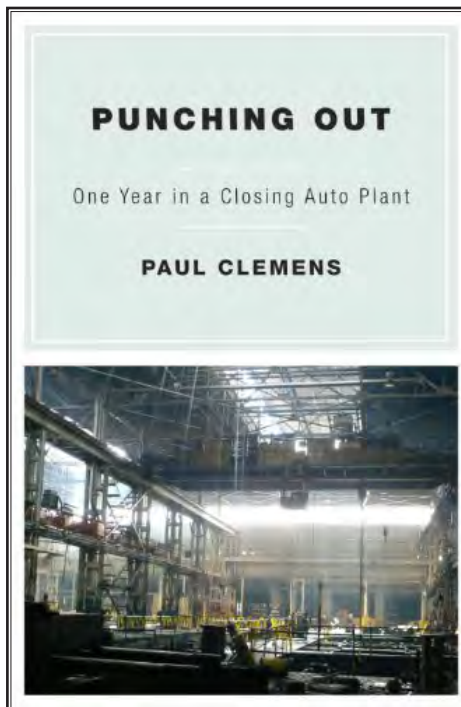
Paul Clemens' *Punching Out* is a dreary but enjoyable read about the closing of a Detroit factory.

The book starts with the last auto part leaving the Budd Detroit Automotive Plant, Stamping and Framing Division. *Punching Out's* strength is in Clemens' knack for sizing up the remaining workers, who are tasked with taking apart the massive assembly-line presses that stamped out auto parts. The members of the core group of laborers and riggers range from immigrants to Arkansas rednecks. Of the Bosnian-born Nedzad, Clemens writes: "He had a bit of a

belly, a European pot carried low, suggestive of small consolations after a day's hard work." Of the Arkansas Boys: "[They] had dental outcomes consistent with the 19th century English Midlands."

Clemens finds ghosts of conflicts past in the recesses of the massive factory — such as old grievances from UAW Local 306 over unpaid snow days in 1965 and layoffs in 1983. The author also encounters but does not explore working class anti-unionism among the rigging crews: "Pro-union and anti-union members of the working class can be as difficult to distinguish, for those who haven't made a study of the schism, as Shia and Sunni." After two decade-long wars in foreign lands, Americans sense a decline of power. *Punching Out* documents a decline much closer to home.

— BENNETT BAUMER



DOUBLEDAY PUBLISHING

How the Twin Towers Transformed New York

BY JOHN TARLETON

As New Yorkers mark the 10th anniversary of 9/11, it's hard to imagine that the 16 acres in Lower Manhattan that were once home to the Twin Towers ever served another purpose. Fortunately, we have Eric Darton, a locally born and bred historian and novelist to remind us of the origins of the World Trade Center in his recently re-released history of the towers, *Divided We Stand*.

In his book, Darton reaches back to the beginning of the 20th century to explore the intellectual and aesthetic ideas as well as the political and economic forces that eventually produced the 110-story behemoths that dominated the New York City skyline for almost three decades. In doing so, he reminds us that while the World Trade Center eventually became "sacred ground" to millions of Americans, it was originally conceived as a power play by local elites. Darton recently spoke with *The Independent* about the World Trade Center's past and present impact on New York, the joys of writing history and why another set of skyscrapers at Ground Zero is exactly what we don't need.

JOHN TARLETON: *What does the story of the World Trade Center's creation tell us about New York?*

ERIC DARTON: The creation of the World Trade Center marked a rather large shift in identity for New York as it abandoned manufacturing and became a city that basically processes financial instruments. What was left of the Port of New York by the mid-1960s was literally buried by landfill from this project. There was a meta-ideology to this which said, "We want to be as far as possible from actual stuff. We really don't want to have stevedores and rats and wharves. We want to live in an abstract realm of pure value." You had financial elites and city planning types who really wanted to wrench New York out of materiality and remake it into a gleaming futuropolis in which poor people and black people would go away and the city would be their own.

JT: *How did the Twin Towers embody the transition toward more abstract forms of capital?*

ED: With the World Trade Center, you went from skyscrapers like the Woolworth Building or the Chrysler Building that have spires, that are kind of halfway between a fortress and a cathedral and that have a dominating but nonetheless aspirational quality, to these two buildings that had none of the aspirational quality and only asserted a kind of very terrifying and terrified kind of dominance. The Twin Towers were pure assertion. There was very little Horatio Alger, very little aspirational about them, even in the bankrupt sense of the American dream.

JT: *What did the towers say about the larger culture from which they sprang?*

ED: By the end of World War II, the United States found itself more powerful than it ever could have imagined. It was like waking up one morning and being 30 feet tall. I don't think we actually took it in emotionally and psychologically that we had transformed into something monstrous. When we built the World Trade Center, we gave ourselves an unconscious sign that we had become something unsustainably huge and destructive. It was a kind of power that said, "I am so rigid I have nowhere to go but to collapse." There was no flex, no play, no accommodation. When you say that about yourself as a culture, it's a good time to step back and reexamine what you are doing. The towers were also a message to us — shut down, don't think, don't even imagine there's something else.

JT: *In *Divided We Stand*, you switched from writing fiction to writing history. What was that like?*

ED: As a writer, I found out that when you observe reality closely and you really look at the documents and other primary sources and open yourself up to the material, you don't have to invent anything. It's all there. Investigating and writing history gives you this very empowering notion that everything comes from something, because anything made by human beings has a social

history. The thrilling part of this was seeing that the original construction of the World Trade Center was a part of a history of New York as well as a part of a history of streams of thought that envisioned the perfectability of cities.

JT: *And now a new World Trade Center is rising from the ashes of the old.*

ED: No one can explain to me why we need what will be at least another five million square feet of office space. It doesn't fit into any economic reality because the costs are so high. It doesn't fit into any set of imaginable human needs in New York. It's not surprising that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is seeking huge toll increases on the bridges and tunnels it controls, in order to pay for this project. When you're committed to a really bad idea, you just pour more and more resources in and you support it any way you can. The one aspect of the design that could speak powerfully are the pools that will be in the footprints of the former towers. They might be a place where people can come to ground themselves in the presence of others, and that would be a real gift.

JT: *What is the relationship between the World Trade Center and other mega-developments that have followed here in New York?*

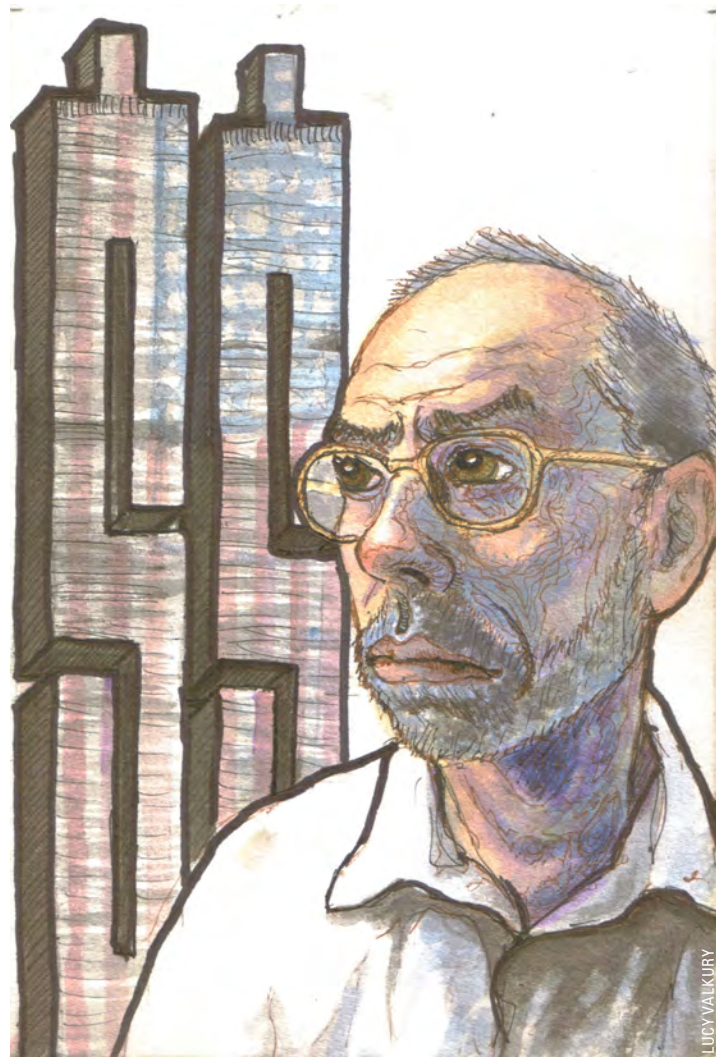
ED: Eminent domain was used in 1966 to erase Radio Row, a perfectly viable commercial neighborhood that had scores of small businesses located in the footprint of the future World Trade Center site. This moved a bunch of legal goalposts and certainly moved people's expectations. Once the powers that be get away with something like that, it's tempting to keep on going. This can be seen in the Atlantic Yards project in downtown Brooklyn, in which eminent domain has been used to advance a massive, undemocratic and useless project.

JT: *If New York weren't a city based around finance, insurance and real estate, what else could it be?*

ED: It could be a lot of things. The city is completely slanted to Fortune 500 corporations and a permanent government

of real estate interests. We really have to get a mixed economy back and put in some protection for small businesses. The lack of any kind of commercial rent control favors the most speculative and rapacious kinds of commercial enterprises. We could have a serious working port in South Brooklyn. We could put our energies into making the city's transportation infrastructure more sane and sensible. With a stock transfer tax, we could fully fund essential social services. There's a tremendous energy here because people come here from all over the world to get something going. They should be able to get a job, put a roof over their heads and live a decent life. New York should be a gigantic refuge for the generative energies of the world because the generative energies of the world come here anyway. The original World Trade Center leveraged us into an economic monoculture of finance, insurance and real estate. It was a dead end. Instead of trying to revive that, we need to move on and create a more self-sustaining, equitable and diversified economic base to support the amazing global culture that flourishes here.

*Eric Darton is the author of *Divided We Stand: A Biography of the World Trade Center* (Basic Books: 1999, 2011), and the novel *Free City*. For more, see ericdarton.net. For a longer version of this interview, see independent.org.*



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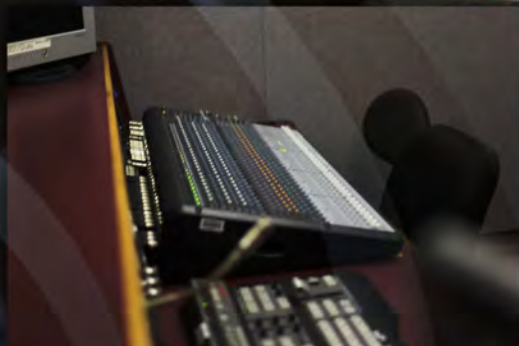
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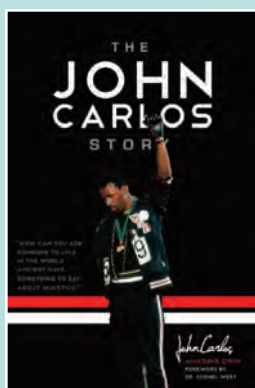
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The John Carlos Story

The Sports Moment That Changed the World **John Carlos & Dave Zirin, Intro by Dr. Cornel West**, \$22.95

Seen around the world, John Carlos & Tommie Smith's Black Power salute on the 1968 Olympic podium sparked controversy and career fallout. Yet their show of defiance remains one of the most iconic images of Olympic history & the Black Power movement. Here is the remarkable story of one of the men behind the salute, life-long activist, John Carlos.

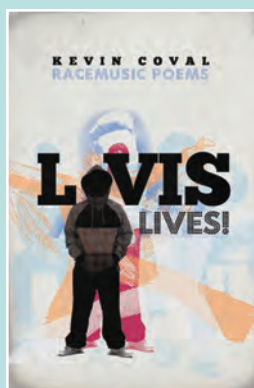
"John Carlos is an American hero. And finally he has written a memoir to tell us his story. I couldn't put this book down."

—Michael Moore

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"It was a statement for the ages. This act of righteous defiance lifted us all to a new level of dignity and shared responsibility to improve the conditions of the poor the world over... But the price of heroism is high. John Carlos paid and this is his story."

—Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr.



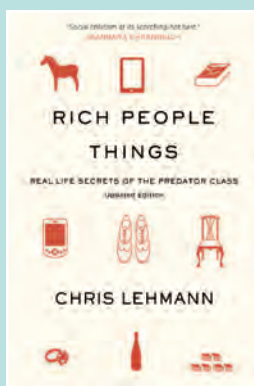
L-vis Lives! Racemusic Poems

Kevin Coval, \$16, September

From 4-time HBO Def Poet Kevin Coval, whom the *Chicago Tribune* calls "the voice of the new Chicago," comes *L-vis Lives!*, a bold new collection exploring the collision of race, art, and appropriation in American culture.

"Coval is a new, glowing voice in the world of literature." —Studs Terkel

"This book is bold, brave and morally messy—twelve rounds of knock-down, drag-out shadowboxing against a shapeshifter. The dark humor, intellectual fervor, and emotional rigor Coval brings to bear animate these pieces, turn caricatures to characters, implicate us all." —Adam Mansbach, author, *Go the F**k to Sleep*



Rich People Things

Real-Life Secrets of the Predator Class

Chris Lehmann, \$16.95, October

Rich People Things lays bare the various dogmas and delusions that prop up plutocratic rule in the post-meltdown age. It's a humorous and harrowing tale of warped populism, phony reform, and blind deference to the nation's financial elite.

"Social criticism at its scorching-hot best." —Barbara Ehrenreich

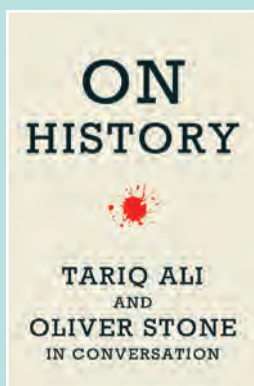
"What a delight it is to have an entire book in which Lehmann gives the plutocrats of this world the drubbing they deserve. His scoffing is a tonic." —Tom Frank



The United States of Fear

Tom Engelhardt, \$16.95, October

This is the startling tale of how fear was profitably shot into the national bloodstream, how the country, gripped by terror fantasies, was locked down, and how a brain-dead Washington elite fiddled and profited while America quietly burned.



On History

Tariq Ali & Oliver Stone in Conversation

Tariq Ali & Oliver Stone, \$16, October

In working together on two challenging new documentaries—filmmaker Oliver Stone engaged with author and filmmaker Tariq Ali in a probing, hard-hitting conversation on the politics of history. Their dialogue brings to light a number of forgotten—or deliberately buried—episodes of American history, For Stone and Ali—two of our most insightful observers on history and popular culture—no topic is sacred, no orthodoxy goes unchallenged.

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Ian Angus & Simon Butler, \$19, Oct.

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